

Veterans Employment & Training Newsletter

Special Edition: Veterans' Benefits

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

Returning to civilian life is exciting, and there are phases of transition that all service members experience during this change. Whether you are active duty, reserve, or recently separated, TAP can assist you with the benefits and opportunities available for this transition. For general assistance or information, visit TurboTAP.org, the official web site for Transition Assistance.

There are many TAP classes offered throughout the State of Michigan.

For more information about these classes, contact the State of Michigan Veterans' Coordinator, Rich Kryza, at (517) 202-1416 or kryzar@michigan.gov.

Agency Sees Significant Increase in Loan Volume over Past Year

More servicemembers and veterans are using their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty benefit, as VA's loan program remains a strong option in today's housing market.

VA is experiencing a significant increase in home loan volume, with more than 162,000 home loan guaranties provided this year, an increase of more than 31 percent over the same period last year.

"VA attributes this increase to the favorable terms traditionally offered with VA loans and the elimination of many no-downpayment products in the conventional mortgage market," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

No-downpayment loans are increasingly difficult to obtain with conventional financing. Under recently enacted legislation, VA now uses a locality-based approach in determining ceilings on its no-downpayment home loans. VA no-downpayment loans are available for as much as \$729,000. Larger VA loans may be obtained with relatively small down payments.

To obtain more information about the VA Loan Guaranty Program, veterans can call VA at 1-877-827-3702. Information can also be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov

Increased Benefits with new GI Bill

On June 30, 2008, President Bush signed the Post-9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008. The new bill applies to those who served on active duty for at least 90 days after September 11, 2001, and the benefits are approximately double the value of the benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill. The full cost of tuition and books is covered, paid directly to the school, and a variable stipend for living expenses is included. Major changes include:

- Transferable to family members
- Free enrollment
- Required to be used at institutions of higher learning offering at least an associates' degree
- 15 years to use 36 months of benefits

For more information about the changes to the GI Bill, visit www.gibill.va.gov.

Protection from Foreclosure for Veterans

This month, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed a bill that protects military service members from the threat of mortgage foreclosure. The bill prevents foreclosure for six months after the end of the homeowner's military service, and imposes a \$2,000 civil fine on companies who attempt to breach this 6-month window.

The new law (Public Act 138) is the latest action in the State of Michigan to help protect military members when they return to Michigan from serving their country. "When military service members return to their families and their communities here in Michigan," according to Governor Granholm, "the last thing they should have to worry about is losing their home."

Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, as amended

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) was enacted by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton on October 13, 1994. USERRA is a federal statute that protects servicemembers' and veterans' civilian employment rights. Among other things, under certain conditions, USERRA requires employers to put individuals back to work in their civilian jobs after military service. For more information, visit

<http://www.esgr.org/userrathelaw.asp?p=43>

For further assistance, contact a [Veterans' Employment Specialist](#) at (800) 455-5228.



Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth
Bureau of Workforce Transformation
Veterans Services
(800) 455-5228

www.michigan.gov/veteranjobs